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? by Thomas Davenport

A BRIEF

MANIFESTATION

OR

The STATE and CASE of the *Quakers* presented to all people, but especially to *Merchants*, *Owners* (and *Masters*) of Ships, and *Mariners*; also to all *Planters* or Occupiers of Lands in the *English* and *Forreign Plantations*.

Shewing the (causless) Cause of their present and cruel Sufferings, from the hands of their own Countrymen and Fellow-Citizens of *London*.

Hereby warning them all, not to joyn hands against the Innocent, nor willingly suffer their Ships (to be imployed) to Transport (nor to buy) any of them (for *Slaves*) to the separating of Husband from Wife, Parents from Children, &c. to the Ruine and Desolation of many Families, and to the provoking the Anger of the Lord against you and your Families, and to smite the Land with a Curse.

But do ye unto all men as you would they should do unto you, &c.

Written on the behalf of the Suffering-People of God (called *Quakers*) and of the Testimony which they hold.

The First day of the Eighth Month, 1664. *T. D.*

Printed at *London*, in the year 1664.

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110. f. 209.

A Brief MANIFESTATION *to Merchants, Seamen, and Planters, &c.*

KNow ye then, that that God who created the Heavens and the Earth, the Omipotent and Almighty *JEHOVAH*, and Lord of Hosts, whose all things are, and for whose Service they were created; who giveth breath and being to all, and in whose hands and at whose dispose is your Life and the Lives of all Mankind; who numbereth your dayes, which are as a span, and pass away swifter than a Weavers shuttle, or as a Post that tarrieth not; who saith to man, *Return to thy dust, and he is no more:* And this is He we own to be our God, whom we serve and worship in the Spirit of his Son, the Light of the World, to whom all Judgment is committed, that men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father who is God over all, blessed for evermore.

And this is he whom we have waited for, and his Light hath shone into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of the Light of the Gospel in the face of Christ Jesus, and by believing in his Light we come to a true sight of our states, and our hearts were ript open, and our iniquities were made manifest unto us, and the Books were opened, and the Earth discloſed, and the Dead appeared, and the Judgment was set up, and we were then judged, every man according to his works, and the things that were written in those Books; And then we knew him to be dreadful indeed (in his just Judgments) against that nature which had transgressed; and his flame was kindled in our hearts, and began to take hold of that which was for the fire, and his Sword was drawn to cut down that which stood in the way, and turned every way to keep the Tree of Life; so that we in this unclean state could not come unto it, though fain would we have lived here, and loth we were to part with that which was so near and dear unto us, to wit, the wisdom, honour, and glory of this present world, which was as so many deaths to us to part with, and we would fain have been Heirs of two Kingdoms: but the Light let us see that we must deny our selves in all that so nearly concerned us, and take up our Cross daily, and follow him our Guide and Leader, though to the

loss

loſs of all. O what thoughts of heart, tumblings of mind, noiſe of wars and rumours of wars (which is not to be expreſſed) was then in our hearts!

At laſt to the Light and Power of God our hearts did bow, and became obedient; then a ſeparation began to be made between the Good and the Evil, and we became judged according to men in the fleſh, that we might be ſaved according to God in the Spirit.

Now the Separation being thus made, and the true Judgment ſet up in our hearts, we could not, as in times paſt, run with the wicked into vanity and exceſs, neither could we joyn with the Superſtitious and Idolaters in their falſe wayes, worſhips and cuſtoms, but have been and are ſtill made willing to bear our Teſtimony publickly againſt them all, both by word and converſation, &c.

And though we have been obedient to the Powers that have been (and to theſe that now are) in all juſt and righteous things, keeping a good *Conſcience void of offence both to God and man*; and for this cauſe we labour diligently and painfully in our Callings, that we may be ſerviceable in our Native Country, where our God hath placed us, having ſomething (and being ready) to miniſter to them that ſtand in need of our help, that thereby we might be a good ſavour to all.

For which cauſe alſo, *we pay Tribute to whom Tribute is due*, and have ſo done to all the Powers (ſince we were a People) declaring thereby *our owning of Magiſtracy*, being willing to ſupport it in all juſt and right things, though ſome have aſperſed and accuſed us of the contrary.

And thus in all things that pertain to Life and Godlineſs, we have endeavoured to live peaceably and honeſtly with all men; and this we declare unto you, that neither the former Powers, nor theſe preſent in Power, neither could, nor can they now, juſtly accuſe us of *plotting* or *contriving* againſt them, neither of *any Sedition* or *ſeditious Practices* towards any of them, as hereby we do call to record the Lord God Almighty, to whom we appeal for Righteous Judgment in the caſe between us. Notwithſtanding we have ſo behaved our ſelves, and that our Adverſaries can lay nothing (juſtly) to our charge; yet behold and ſee how we have been perſecuted and cruelly intreated by them all, but eſpecially at this day: O how are we beaten in the ſtreets and places of our Meetings! how is our hair plucked off our heads! how are we kick'd and pinch'd on the arms,

and ſome women pinched and ſmitten on their tender breſts, to their great harm! how are we packed into cloſe and naſty Priſons, near three hundred at one time in one Priſon! and how have ſome of our Friends been beaten, & *Felons* ſuffered to abuſe them there! how have ſome of us been taken forcibly from our Brethren, where we have been met together in our Priſon-houſe, and threatned, and put into the Hole or Dungeon! how have ſome of us been taken out of one Priſon-room, and caſt into deep and diſmal Holes, where we have been in danger of our lives, by reaſon of a corrupt unclean Priſoner who lay there, even worſe and more nauſeous than any filthy Carrion or Excrement whatſoever, a place not fit for Swine! O how are we proſecuted with violence at their Seſſions, and the Jurors and Peoples Underſtandings endeavoured to be poiſoned, and They incenſed againſt us, by Speeches made to render us even as the worſt of men, as ſee the Book entituled, *The Innocency and Conſcientiouſneſs of the Quakers aſſerted and cleared, in anſwer to Judge* Keeling's *Speech!* How are the Jurors that ſerved for Felons and Murderers changed, and others impanelled which may ſerve for their purpoſe! how are others brow-beaten and threatned, which cannot in good conſcience (the Evidence not being clear) anſwer that ſpirit of Cruelty in our Perſecutors, to bring us in *Guilty!* how are many of us, thorow unjuſt proceedings, ſentenced to Tranſportation and Exilement from our Native Country, Wives, Children, and deareſt Relations, into Forreign Parts and Places of the World, there to ſeek our bread amongſt ſtrangers! Much more might we ſay of the Cruelty and Oppreſſions we meet with from ſome fierce and forward ſpirits, who are Miniſters of the Laws both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical (as they are called) who ſummon us to their Courts for not coming to their Pariſh Worſhips, fining and impriſoning us in many parts of this Nation, endeavouring thereby to vex us and to weary us out, and force us to conform to that which our God hath ſhewed us he abhors.

And now Friends, what is the cauſe of all this Cruelty that's thus daily exerciſed upon us, even for no other cauſe but for keeping a good Conſcience towards God, who hath loved and purchaſed us with a great price, even with his own Blood, that we ſhould be no longer our own, but the Lord's, who hath endeared us to him and engaged our hearts to bow to and worſhip him, and in whoſe Fear we cannot

cannot but meet together to wait upon him, and to ſeek his Face more and more, whoſe Preſence hath ſo often refreſhed and gladded our hearts in our Aſſemblings and *Meetings* together: And by this our meeting together we bear our Teſtimony for the Lord and his Truth, thereby declaring to all men that we own him alone to be our Law-giver, our King and Guide (in all matters that concern his Worſhip) and he doth and will come and ſave us.

And alſo, by this our meeting together we exhort one another, ſtrengthen and build up one another in our moſt holy Faith, praying in the holy Ghoſt with all prayers and ſupplications for *Magiſtrates* and for all men, that they with us may come to know (& be obedient to) Chriſt Jeſus the Light, that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and by his Blood (which is his Life) may come to receive remiſſion of ſins, and an Inheritance among the Saints in Light.

And likewiſe by this our meeting together, we find an Increaſe in the pure Love (which thinketh no evil) one to another, and to all men, yea to our very enemies (deſiring from the bottom of our hearts they may repent them of all their Sins, and of all the Blood, Cruelties and Perſecutions they have unjuſtly committed upon and againſt us) of all which things we are juſtified of the Lord, and have an aſſurance that it's well-pleaſing and acceptable to him, as we abide in the Fear of his moſt holy Name.

Which holy practice of *meeting together* was required of, and found in the People of God of old, as in *Mal.* 3. 16. *Then thoſe that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name.* And ſo was the Apoſtle's Practice and Exhortation to the Saints, *Not to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner of ſome* (then was, and now) *is, but ſo much the more* (*to exhort one another*) *as you ſee the Day approaching.* Which holy Practices we own and do witneſs, and that *as the Day approaches* (to wit) the Light ariſeth, and draweth nearer and nearer to us by its heat, vertue and ſplendor, Even ſo much the more are we enclined and engaged in our hearts to meet and aſſemble together, to wait upon the Lord, till he cauſeth it to ariſe, and ſhine, and overſpread the whole Earth.

And for theſe Cauſes, as aforeſaid, and for ſuch holy Ends, do we meet together, and for no other; God Almighty is our Record that

we

we ſpeak the truth unfeignedly from our hearts, and not as we have been falſly accuſed and reported of (by time-ſervers and men-pleaſers) for meeting *ſeditiouſly to plot*, or *wickedly to contrive Inſurrections, in contempt of the King and his Laws, and to the breach of the Publick Peace*; and that we *are an Obſtinate People, and will not be ſubject to Authority*.

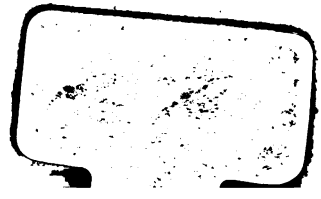
All theſe and many more the like ſlanders and falſe accuſations do we daily undergo, by ſome that are fierce and cruel in their ſpirits againſt us, endeavouring to incenſe the King againſt us, and to procure Laws to be made to deſtroy us, and that all people may even deliver us up to the ſpoil, as a people not fit to live amongſt them: But we believe the King hath a Witneſs in his Conſcience, which (oft-times) ſpeaks for us (*viz.*) that we are not ſuch a People as reported of; and he hath not approved of ſome Cruelties that have been of late exerciſed upon us. And as for the People which are our Neighbours, and know us (with whom we do converſe) will juſtifie us, and ſay we are a very diligent and peaceable People, and do much pitty us; ſaying, *We deſerve no ſuch thing at their hands.*

Yet notwithſtanding all the Cruelties that are exerciſed upon us, if our own perſons were only concerned, we could hold our peace; but in as much as the ſpreading of the Everlaſting Truth, and honourable Name of the Lord God Everlaſting, is deeply concerned; and that the Blood-guiltineſs of many cries ſo loud for Vengeance (which is ready to be poured forth;) And alſo, that all who have yet had no hand in ſuch Cruelties, might hereby be warned; WE from theſe deep and weighty *Conſiderations*, are moved in our hearts to lay theſe things before you, that if it may be, a ſtop might be put to any further exerciſe thereof; and that neither ye who are *Merchants*, or *Marriners*, or any other, might have any hand in the execution thereof in any meaſure, either by permitting your Ships, or Seamen, to be the *Tranſporters* of the *Innocent*, or any other wayes of Cruelty whatſoever.

Now Friends, having thus laid our Caſe before you, and opened our hearts thus unto you concerning our *Principles*, *Practices* and *Profeſſions* towards God, and our *Demeanours* and *Behaviours* towards the King and his Government, with our *Deportment* and *Converſation* towards all men; alſo ſomething of our *Sufferings*, and the *Innocent Cauſes* thereof, all which will certainly plead for us; and therefore to God's Witneſs in all your Conſciences do we appeal for true

Judgment

Judgment in this caſe; that is to ſay, whether we have deſerved ſuch Cruelties to be inflicted upon us, who are an Innocent People, and guilty of the breach of no Juſt Law.

Neither are we guilty of the breach of this Act upon pretence of which we now ſuffer; which Act is to ſuppreſs *Seditious Conventicles*, and therefore not Innocent Meetings, and *to prevent the growth of ſuch Sectaries, who at their Meetings contrive Inſurrections, &c.* as by the Title and Preamble (which is the Reaſon or Key) thereof, appears; none of which things yet to this day have been proved againſt us, nor the leaſt ſhew of any ſuch thing, though it hath been put upon them to prove, and their VVitneſſes have been asked what we were doing in our Meetings, and whether they either ſaw or heard any thing tending to Sedition? they have teſtified for us, and anſwered, *Nay*, we were peaceable, and ſo could not be guilty of the breach of this very Act, under pretence of which we now ſuffer. Yet notwithſtanding, by the brow-beating and threatning both of the Grand and Petty Jurors, ſome Jurors have been over-awed, and have bowed to their wills ſo far as to find the Bills againſt us, and others, to find us guilty; though ſome other Jurors, that were more wiſe and valiant for the Truth, not finding ſufficient Evidence to prove their Indictments, and alſo nothing appearing to them to make us Tranſgreſſors, by any thing we either did or ſaid in our Meetings that tended to Sedition or Inſurrection (againſt which the Act was only made) and falſe witneſs being alſo born, they could not in good conſcience find us guilty of the Indictment, though ſome of them therefore received frowns and threats, and are bound over to give an account at the *Kings-Bench Bar* the next *Term*: but ſome of the Priſoners not finding freedom in themſelves to anſwer their form of pleading, *Guilty or not guilty*, (their Indictments being indirect) and queſtions being put to enſnare them, as alſo ſome not being acquainted with their way of pleading) they readily pronounced their unjuſt Sentence of *Tranſportation* againſt them, ſave only the VVomen that have Husbands are committed to the *Houſe of Correction*, ſome for the ſpace of *eleven months*, and others for *twelve months*. Now ſeeing their Actings are ſo contrary to Juſtice and Right, and alſo to the late Act, for you or any of you to put this Illegal and Unjuſt Sentence in Execution, by Tranſporting any of us, would be very hard meaſure, and not ſafe for you, nor to the Kings honour.

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